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# *Promising Practice Fact Sheet – Workforce Development*

## *Northern Virginia Family Services, “Training Futures” - Virginia*

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### **Program**

**Description:** A program started in 1996 that enables students to qualify for entry-level office positions and also earn up to 17 credits through a partnership between the nonprofit Northern Virginia Family Services and Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA).

**Target Population:** Majority of trainees are employed in low paying jobs. Approximately two-thirds are parents supporting children, 75% are immigrants (many were professionals in their home countries), and 20-30% are unemployed adults.

### **Goals:**

- To meet the needs of metropolitan area employers who seek qualified entry level workers.
- To help under-employed or unemployed people secure a rewarding career with potential for professional advancement and permanent employment.

**Cost:** Annual budget of \$500,000 from mix of individual contributions, foundation grants, government grants, contracts and program service fees. Program helps students apply for federal and state financial aid.

**Evidence:** Descriptive data

**Caseload Data:** Provided services to over 1,100 clients; annually.

### **Services overview:**

- Nationally-recognized “Training Futures” program provides a 25-week professional development curriculum designed to prepares low-income, unemployed or under paid individuals to move from dead-end or sporadic employment to stable professional office careers which provide livable wages, benefits, and opportunities for professional and personal advancement.
- Training Futures is an innovative training program because it offers its curriculum in a simulated office environment to teach computer skills, business English, business math, keyboarding, filing, professional development workshops, medical terminology and business communication skills. Trainees receive performance reviews and are expected to dress professionally, arrive on time, complete office assignments and interact professionally with staff and fellow trainees.
- Recent emphasis trainings include employment in health care administration.
- It uses an “imaginal” education model whereby students are encouraged to envision themselves as competent, confident and successful professionals. This approach is integrated into the curriculum.
- Trainees receive one-on-one support during job search such as assistance with resumes, interviewing skills, and business etiquette.
- Additionally, trainees gain valuable direct business work experience through the internship program. This program places interns with local businesses and hospitals within the community to provide an environment that supports additional exposure for trainees.
- Accent reduction classes are offered for non-native English speakers.
- Business model that leverages financial aid for college coursework, with revenues shared with between the college and Northern Virginia Family Services.
- It uses 75-100 professional volunteers to provide 3,500 hours of volunteer time each year.

**Eligibility:**

- Potential trainees must take a college English placement test.
- In Northern Virginia, the program targets trainees who have an interest in taking college courses.

**Findings:**

- Training Futures was launched in 1996 and has since trained over 1,100 people from diverse backgrounds and experience. The employment rate of graduates far exceeds those of other national programs. Placing Training Futures in the top performing echelon.
  - 90% graduate the program,
  - 89% secured employment,
  - 91% had wage gains.
- More than 500 trainees enrolled in the community college to help them launch into advanced professional careers.

**Implications for Policymakers and Program Developers to Consider:**

- Immigrants can find it difficult to make the transition between traditional ESL courses and postsecondary or workforce development programs. Many educational programs are not well-designed for non-traditional students, including many immigrants.
- Immigrant students often need additional academic support and guidance that are not provided by many institutions.
- Educational programs do not typically offer employment-related services.

**Resources:**

- [www.nvfs.org](http://www.nvfs.org); Janice McDonald, Program Assistant and Jane Buchman, Workforce Development Specialist , 703-448-1650
- CTE Partnership Profile Template, Aspen Institute, contacts for the program were Bill Browning (NOVA), Sharon LeGrande and Susan Craver (NVFS)
- Case Study Summary, Northern VA. Community College's "American Dream Team ESL for Employment Initiative", January 2009
- Testimony of Robert G. Templin Jr., President, Northern VA Community College, before the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, February 24, 2010